

Winters in Alberta

In Alberta the winter months are conventionally the worst time of year for fires in the home.

With the arrival of winter and colder weather, we bring out heaters, electric blankets and spend more time in the kitchen cooking hearty meals.

The two most common causes of winter house fires are cooking that was left unattended and electrical fires caused by heating appliances.

There are some simple steps that all households can take to protect their families and home from fires.

- Never leave cooking unattended in the range. Supervise children at all times in the kitchen.
- Keep an extinguisher near the range.
- Before using devices and appliances - check heaters, electric blankets and other electrical appliances for frayed cords.
- Don't leave heating appliances on when not in attendance or use.
- Maintain a gap of no less than one meter between flammable objects and a heat source. For example: between an electric fireplace and a blanket.
- Clean the lint filter in the clothes dryer after each use and never leave the dryer operating when you are out of the house.
- Ensure your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector are working on each level of the home and test monthly, change the batteries with the time changes.
- Develop a home escape plan and rehearse it with all members of the household.
- Have a winter home safety kit that includes a battery-powered radio, water, non-perishable food, first aid kit, etc. Visit www.72hours.ca for more information on what items to include.

Snow Shoveling Safety

Snow removal is a great form of exercise but can also cause neck, back and other injuries. To prevent injury practice these safety tips:

- Use an ergonomic shovel.
- Push the snow, don't lift it.
- If you have to lift, use your legs not your back.
- Keep your back as straight as possible.
- Don't twist your body when moving.
- Take plenty of breaks.
- Don't force it, let the shovel do most of the work.